

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 ACDA-12 /105 W
-----084059 121403Z /46

R 120315Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1353
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, ID, PEPR
SUBJECT: CURRENT FRETILIN LEADERSHIP

1. AN ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN THE SINGAPORE STRAIS TIMES
SEPTEMBER 9 AND WRITTEN BY ONE OF THE REPORTERS WHO ACCOM-
PANIED INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOCHTAR KUSUMAATMADJA TO
EAST TIMOR FROM SEPTEMBER 6-8 ALONG WITH SEVERAL AMBASSADORS,
GAVE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ABOUT THE CURRENT FRETILIN LEADER-
SHIP. THESE DETAILS WERE PROVIDED BY INDONESIAN OFFICIALS
AND FRETILIN DEFECTORS IN EAST TIMOR TO THE REPORTER; THEY HAVE NOT
YET APPEARED IN THE INDONESIAN PRESS.

2. THE ARTICLE REPORTS THAT FRETILIN TODAY IS LED BY A SMALL,
NEW GROUP OF RADICALS AFTER A JUNGLE COUP OCCURRED IN SEPTEMBER 1977 OUSTING THE MORE MODERATE FRANCISCO XAVIER DO AMARAL AS PRESIDENT ALONG WITH HIS CABINET. AMARAL WAS ACCUSED OF COLLABORATING WITH THE INDONESIANS AND ACCEPTING INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA; HE WAS HELD AND TORTURED BY HIS FELLOW FRETILIN MEMBERS. LAST WEEK, HE WAS RESCUED BY GOVERN-
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MENT FORCES AT DILOR WHEN HIS FRETILIN GUARDS FLED UPON
THE APPROACH OF THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT TROOPS. THE
FATE OF THE REST OF THE OLD AMARAL CABINET IS UNKNOWN.

3. THE NEW GROUP IS LED BY NICOLAI LOBATO AND IS BELIEVED
TO BE A RADICAL GROUP MIXING PRO-MOSCOW AND MAOIST COMMUNISTS.
LOBATO HIMSELF IS REPORTED TO BE NON-COMMUNIST. BUT THE

REAL POWER IS HELD BY A TRIO OF FORMER TIMORESE STUDENTS IN LISBON: NICENTE DOS REIS, ANTONIO CAVARINNO (BOTH MAOISTS) AND HAMIS BASAREWA, A PRO-MOSCOW TIMORESE ARAB. MOST OF THE NEW LEADERS ARE IN THEIR THIRTIES AND ARE COMPARATIVELY WELL-EDUCATED. MOST ARE OPERATING FROM THE JUNGLES OF EAST TIMOR BUT TWO MEMBERS ARE IN MOZAMBIQUE, INCLUDING "FOREIGN MINISTER" MARI ALKATIRI. BETWEEN 60 AND 70 FRETILIN GUERRILLAS ARE SAID TO BE UNDERGOING TRAINING IN MOZAMBIQUE.

4. INDONESIA OFFICIALS SAY THE REBELS ARE ROVING IN SMALL BANDS IN ISOLATED JUNGLE TERRAINS, PRESENTLY CONCENTRATING MORE ON STAYING ALIVE THAN PURSUING GUERRILLA WARFARE.

5. THE REPORTER STATED IN THE ARTICLE THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS TO THE GROUP VISITING EAST TIMOR THAT FRETILIN CLAIMS OF CONTROLLING 85 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WHILE THE GOI HELD THE TOWNS, WERE "COMPLETE FABRICATION".

6. THE ARTICLE QUOTES INDONESIA BRIG. GENERAL KALBUADI DADING, THE MILITARY COMMANDER OF EAST TIMOR, AS SAYING THERE WERE NO MORE THAN 100 ARMED FRETILIN GUERRILLAS, BUT THE REPORTER SAID OTHER MILITARY SOURCES HAD SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF UP TO 300 MORE FIGHTERS WITHOUT ARMS BUT CARRYING SPEARS AND KNIVES. GENERAL DADING'S VIEW WAS THAT THE INSURGENCY WOULD FIZZLE OUT BY THE END OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE YEAR, ALTHOUGH THE REPORTER'S OWN VIEW WAS THAT THE RADICALS APPEARED DETERMINED TO CONTINUE AND THE INSURGENCY MIGHT WELL LINGER ON.

7. THE REPORTER SPOKE OF THE INDONESIANS BEING WORRIED ABOUT THE FRETILIN'S CAPTURE OF 5,000 TIMORESE CIVILIANS, TRAVELLING WITH THE FRETILIN IN SMALL, MOBILE GROUPS. THESE CIVILIANS WERE FOR THE PURPOSE OF GROWING AND SEEKING FOOD AS WELL AS POSSIBLY SERVING AS HOSTAGES IN CASE THE MILITARY WERE TO MOUNT OPERATIONS AGAINST THEM.

8. THE INDONESIANS MILITARY CLAIMED TO HAVE 4,000 TROOPS IN EAST TIMOR (WHICH INCLUDED TWO TIMORESE BATTALIONS). 8,000 TIMORESE HOME GUARDS WERE ALSO ARMED TO DEFEND THEIR OWN VILLAGE FRETILIN.

9. COMMENT: THE AMBASSADORS WHO ACCOMPANIED MINISTER MOCHTAR TO EAST TIMOR SAT IN ON THE PRESS MEETING WITH FRETILIN DEFECTORS AT WHICH THESE MATTERS WERE DISCUSSED. THE STRAITS TIMES ACCOUNT IS AN ACCURATE REPORT OF WHAT WAS SAID. WE CANNOT JUDGE THE ACCURACY OF ALL OF THESE OBSERVATIONS. EMBASSY RECORDS HAD LISTED "PRESIDENT" LOBATO AND "FOREIGN

MINISTER" MARI ALKATIRI AS PART OF THE NEW LEADER-
SHIP BUT THE TRIO LISTED IN PARAGRAPH THREE IS NEW INFORMATION
TO US.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, LIBERATION FRONTS, FRETILIN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JAKART12289
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780370-0635
Format: TEL
From: JAKARTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780978/aaaacmcu.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 97e15b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1471772
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CURRENT FRETILIN LEADERSHIP
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, PEPR, ID, (LOBATO, NICOLAI), (REIS, NICENTE DOS), (CAVARINNO, ANTONIO), (BASAREWA, HAMIS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/97e15b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014